

AMY KLOBUCHAR
MINNESOTA

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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May 20, 2014

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I am writing in support of your efforts to include rural broadband experiments as part of your January 31, 2014 Technology Transitions Order. Broadband access should be available to all Americans, regardless of where they live. I request that you give careful consideration to the 64 expressions of interest from rural Minnesota telecommunications providers.

With a helping hand from the FCC to boost broadband access and deployment, I believe that these proposed experiments will result in the discovery of new and efficient ways of providing broadband access to small towns and rural areas. Allowing rural providers to experiment and find local solutions to improve access to broadband will ensure that businesses, families and students can utilize these connections to help boost local economies and compete in a global marketplace.

As our legacy phone systems age and we transition to a digital era it is critically important to bring broadband to all corners of the country. The increasing importance of broadband has a direct impact on our nation's competitiveness, economy, and national security. Just as innovative entities in Minnesota worked to bring electricity and telephone service to every home in the 1930s, we must now ensure in today's 21st century economy that every home and business has access to high speed, affordable internet.

Thank you for your efforts to expand rural broadband internet access and your careful consideration of the expressions of interest submitted by Minnesota entities for the rural broadband experiments.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 29, 2014

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Fiber-to-the-Premises (FTTP) broadband deployment proposals that were submitted by thirty-nine entities from Minnesota. I appreciate your views and will ensure that your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

In its unanimously adopted *Technology Transitions Order (Order)* in January, the Commission recognized that particular challenges exist for the deployment of next generation communications services in rural areas. In order to inform our policies on building next generation networks in rural America, the Commission invited proposals parties to submit expressions of interest to determine whether there is interest into constructing high bandwidth networks in rural, high-cost areas, including Tribal lands.

As you note, a diverse set of entities have filed nearly 1,000 expressions of interest, including rural telephone companies, electric co-ops, cable and wireless Internet service providers, schools and libraries, research and education networks, and rural communities. The proposals reflect the understanding that high bandwidth services are becoming increasingly important to the future of economic development, education, health care, government services, entertainment, information, communication and creativity.

The Commission currently is reviewing the expressions of interest that have been submitted, and we have sought public comment on a number of rural broadband experiment issues, including the size of the budget and selection criteria to be used in reviewing proposals. After completing a review of the submissions and the record in response to our *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, the Commission would adopt an Order setting a budget and establishing detailed selection criteria for rural broadband experiments. At that point, we would invite parties, such as the Minnesota entities you reference, to submit formal proposals for consideration by Commission staff.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler